

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(☒) Release (☐) Excise (☐) Deny

Exemption(s): _____

Declassify: (☐) In Part (☐) In Full

(☐) Classify as _____ (☐) Extend as _____ (☐) Downgrade to _____

Date _____ Declassify on _____ Reason _____

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August 5, 1976

Dear Mr. Edwards:

Thank you for your letter of July 1 requesting information about the human rights situation in Argentina.

Regrettably, the political violence in Argentina, which has been going on for several years, has increased in the past few months. Leftist terrorists have engaged in a methodical campaign of assassination and kidnapping directed at policemen, military personnel, and business executives. The Argentine authorities have arrested thousands of suspected subversives and have increased their raids on suspected terrorist hide-outs. In addition, vigilante groups, whose identity is not clear, have engaged in kidnappings and killings of leftists, including foreign political refugees residing in Argentina.

We have discussed this situation at length with high level Argentina officials both in Washington and in Buenos Aires. The Argentine authorities state they are committed to respect for human rights and deplore the activities of the vigilante groups, which they say they are unable to control. They say they expect to bring to a halt all violence, by the right as well as the left, but that, realistically, this may take some time.

The Argentine Government has stated that it will not forceably repatriate refugees for political or ideological reasons. However, foreign political refugees seem to have attracted the special interest of vigilante groups. Both the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the Government of Argentina have appealed to us and to other governments for assistance in relocating refugees in other countries. We have currently under urgent consideration how best to respond to the UNHCR appeal. The situation clearly has deteriorated in the last several days.

The Honorable
Don Edwards,
House of Representatives.

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I hope this is responsive to your inquiry, but please let me know if I have overlooked any aspect of this problem that you would like discussed in more detail.

Sincerely,

GSW

Robert J. McCloskey
Assistant Secretary
for Congressional Relations

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